

Young veterans face unemployment rate of over 14 percent

Philadelphia, PA - With more than 270,000 veterans expected to leave the service this year, Congressman John Adler (NJ-03), a member of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, and Congressman Patrick Murphy (PA-08), the first Iraq war veteran elected to Congress, announced new efforts to increase job opportunities for veterans. Recent national and local figures put the unemployment rate among veterans ages 18 to 24 at fifty percent higher than the national average.

Nationwide, young men and women completing their military service are struggling to find work in civilian life. The tough economy, a deluge of returning soldiers, and the difficulties around accessing higher education have led to more veterans competing for a diminished universe of jobs. In fact, three out of four new veterans cite difficulty translating their military experience into a new job.

Outside the Philadelphia Veterans Multi-Service & Education Center, Adler and Murphy released startling statistics, highlighting the rising number of unemployed veterans:

- Young veterans - between the ages of 18 and 24 - face an unemployment rate of 14.1 percent. That is 50 percent higher than the national unemployment rate.
- In 2001, 176,000 service members were discharged from the military. This year, that number is expected to skyrocket to 278,100. That means in 2009 alone, there will be 100,000 more veterans entering civilian life.
- Those who served in the U.S. Armed Forces since 2001 - suffer an unemployment rate of 7.3 percent, meaning they are almost twice as other veterans to face unemployment.
- Nationwide, the unemployment rate for veterans is 4.6 percent. In New Jersey and Pennsylvania, the unemployment rate reflects the national numbers holding at 4.3 percent and 4.4 percent respectively.

"It's unacceptable that the brave men and women who are serving our country are returning home unable to find work," Congressman Adler said. "Our young veterans have already sacrificed so much, and we need to ensure they are able to find jobs at home."

"Our returning heroes deserve every opportunity as they readjust to civilian life," added Congressman Murphy. "Representative Adler's legislation, combined with tax credits provided in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, creates opportunities for job training and employment for these servicemembers."

"Education is the number one influential factor in increasing the probability for our returning men and women to have a successful transition back into the community," said William Brown, founder of Rutgers University Veterans for Education and a former Navy SEAL and Iraq War veteran. "I strongly support Congressman Adler's efforts to give these men and women every opportunity to obtain a higher education."

The lawmakers outlined various efforts to increase job opportunities, including tax credits for small businesses that hire veterans, federal contracts for veteran owned small businesses, and greater access to college for veterans of all ages:

Tax Credit for Small Business

A provision in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act expanded the Work Opportunity Tax Credit to cover recent veterans who have become unemployed. In return for hiring unemployed veterans that separated from the military in the past five years, businesses receive a \$2,400 tax credit.

Federal Contract for Veteran Owned Small Business

Legislation introduced by Rep. Adler, and supported by Rep. Murphy would increase opportunities available to veteran owned small businesses. The bill would help veterans obtain contracts and subcontracts from the Department of Veterans Affairs and all federal agencies.

Education Opportunities for Veterans

On May 21, the ground breaking G.I. Bill made a new generation of veterans eligible for increased education benefits. Military men and women can now apply for a significantly increased level of benefits to pay for the full cost of education at any publicly supported college or university.

In addition, Adler and Murphy supported a bipartisan resolution urging universities nationwide to seek membership in the Servicemembers Opportunity College (SOC) Consortium. The

Consortium allows service members to enroll in a participating school and continue their bachelor and graduate-level degree programs on school campuses, military installations, and armories within the United States and overseas.